

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR XF XA UR MO

SUBJECT: KING HASSAN'S VIEWS OF MIDDLE EAST AND SOVIET THREAT

1. SUMMARY: KING HASSAN TOLD ME FEBRUARY 14 THAT HE WAS WORKING ON POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A VIABLE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PLAN. MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER NOW IN MIDDLE EAST SOUNDING OUT ARAB LEADERS ON THEIR LATEST THINKING. HASSAN BELIEVED HE COULD PLAY HELPFUL ROLE IN VIEW OF HIS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH LEADERS OF ARAB CONFRONTATION STATES AND HIS "CLOSE, REGULAR" CONTACTS WITH ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER RABIN. THIS A PROPITIOUS TIME FOR PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE, IN KING'S JUDGMENT, WITH ARAB MODERATES RECOGNIZING THAT PROLONGED TENSION COULD LEAD TO RADICALIZATION OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO BENEFIT OF SOVIETS. KING HOPED FOR STRONG US LEADERSHIP AND STRESSED MOROCCO'S READINESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO COMBATTING SOVIET INROADS THROUGH ENCOURAGING MAJOR PROGRESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HASSAN SAID THAT HE WOULD WELCOME EARLY MEETING WITH SECRETARY, AND SUGGESTED TECHNICAL STOP IN MOROCCO ON WAY BACK FROM MIDDLE EAST. IF THIS WERE NOT POSSIBLE, HE HOPED TO SEE SECRETARY EVEN BRIEFLY IN RABAT WHEN LATTER VISITED EUROPE. END SUMMARY

2. KING HASSAN RECEIVED ME FOR ONE HOUR TETE-A-TETE FEBRUARY 14

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PRIOR TO MY TRAVEL TO AMMAN TO MEET WITH SECRETARY. I EXPLAINED THAT SECRETARY'S TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST WAS FOR FACT-FINDING, NOT NEGOTIATION, AND THAT NORTH AFRICAN CHIEFS OF MISSION WOULD BE SEEING SECRETARY IN AMMAN TO RECEIVE VIEWS OF NEW ADMINISTRATION, TO DISCUSS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TO REVIEW BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN AREA OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO US.

3. REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST, HASSAN SAID THAT HE HAD SENT FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI A FEW DAYS AGO TO OBTAIN THE LATEST THINKING OF LEADERS OF ARAB CONFRONTATION STATES SO HE COULD TRY TO DEVELOP THE POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF A VIABLE PEACE PLAN. BECAUSE OF HIS PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH SADAT, ASSAD, HUSSEIN, KHALED, FAHD AND OTHER ARAB LEADERS AND FACT HE WAS IN "CLOSE,

EGULAR CONTACT" WITH ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER RABIN, HE HOPED TO CONTRIBUTE QUIETLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO THE PEACE-MAKING PROCESS. IN HIS VIEW, THIS WAS THE TIME TO MOVE TOWARD SOLUTION, AS ARAB CONFRONTATION STATES HAD BECOME VERY REALISTIC AND WERE READY FOR PEACE. KING ELABORATED THAT MODERATE ARABS RECOGNIZED THAT PROLONGED STALEMATE OR NEW UPSURGE OF TENSION COULD ONLY STRENGTHEN RADICAL FORCES AND UNDERMINE MODERATE REGIMES, LEADING TO REINFORCEMENT OF SOVIET POSITION IN AREA, A SITUATION THE MODERATE ARAB STATES WERE DETERMINED TO AVOID.

4. KING EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN OVER QADHAFI, WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS "CRAZY" AND A "FOOL." QADHAFI HAD 600 TANKS AND DOZENS OF THE LATEST JET AIRCRAFT, WHICH THE SOVIETS COULD EMPLOY TO EXPAND THEIR INFLUENCE. IF PEACE EFFORTS SUCCEEDED, QADHAFI'S ABILITY TO STIR UP TROUBLE WOULD BE GREATLY DIMINISHED, AND COUNTRIES SUCH AS EGYPT AND SYRIA COULD FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING INTERNAL STABILITY.

5. "THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY." KING DIGRESSED, THAT US DID NOT WISH TO DO ANYTHING AGAINST LIBYA, BECAUSE THE US FAVORED A CHANGE OF REGIME IN THE SUDAN WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY FORCE
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SAUDI ARABIA INTO A SATELLITE RELATIONSHIP TO THE US. WHEN I EXPRESSED AMAZEMENT AT THIS FARFETCHED THEORY, KING ADDED THAT HE ALSO DID NOT BELIEVE IT, BUT, IF IT WERE TRUE, THIS WOULD BE A "DANGEROUS" POLICY TO PURSUE. BECAUSE OF THE APPARENT US RELUCTANCE TO ACT AGAINST LIBYA, HE UNDERSTOOD HOW SUCH SPECULATION COULD ARISE. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD TOLD HIS FOREIGN MINISTER TO SEND HIM ANYTHING HE PICKED UP DURING HIS CURRENT TRIP, EVEN FAR-OUT ITEMS SUCH AS THIS.

6. KING HOPED THAT THE US RECOGNIZED THE DANGERS IN THE AREA, INCLUDING THE THREAT TO THE SUDAN, A KEY COUNTRY FOR EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. WITH THE SOVIETS IN SOMALIA AND SOUTH YEMEN, THE PRECARIOUS POSITION OF THE STRAITS OF BAB EL-MANDEB WAS ALL TOO APPARENT. SOVIET INFLUENCE WAS ALSO GAINING ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA, AS WITNESS MOZAMBIQUE, TANZANIA AND ANGOLA. KING BELIEVED SOVIETS MIGHT TRY TO EXTEND THEIR INFLUENCE, DRAWING ON THE ARSENAL IN LIBYA WHICH ONLY SOVIETS THEMSELVES WERE CAPABLE OF OPERATING. THUS IF US DID NOT EXERT THE NECESSARY LEADERSHIP, FURTHER SOVIET INROADS ON THE CONTINENT WOULD BE INEVITABLE.

7. CONCERNING ISRAEL, KING VIEWED RABIN AS BEST ISRAELI LEADER TO MAKE PEACE. KING FELT RABIN SINCERELY DESIRED PEACE, AND AS A SABRA KNEW AND UNDERSTOOD THE ARABS. AS A MILITARY MAN, RABIN WAS ALSO BETTER EQUIPPED TO MAKE PEACE THAN A CIVILIAN. IT WAS THUS IN US AS WELL AS ARAB INTEREST TO SEE RABIN CONTINUE IN OFFICE.

8. KING SAID IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE THAT HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH RABIN ON FUTURE SHAPE OF PALESTINIAN STATE. RABIN HAD HELD THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO JORDAN. KING HAD POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT COMBINING "FOUR MILLION" PALESTINIANS WITH "ONE MILLION" JORDANIANS WOULD INEVITABLY RADICALIZE JORDANIAN REGIME, CONSTITUTING A THREAT TO NEIGHBORING STATES. SYRIA, SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUCH A RADICALIZED STATE. ON OTHER HAND, IF WEST BANK WERE GIVEN TO PALESTINIANS FOR THEIR
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OWN STATE, WITH ACCESS TO THE SEA ONLY THROUGH JORDAN OR ISRAEL, RESTRAINT COULD BE EXERCISED THROUGH ISRAEL, SYRIA AND JORDAN "SANDWICHING" THE NEW STATE. KING WAS CONFIDENT THAT SYRIA WOULD SUPPORT HUSSEIN IF PALESTINIANS GOT OUT OF HAND IN A NEW STATE. KING FELT THAT RABIN NOW APPRECIATED THIS APPROACH.

9. IN SUMMING UP, HASSAN EMPHASIZED THAT MOROCCO WAS ENTIRELY WITH THE WEST AND OPPOSED TO SOVIET INFLUENCE. MOROCCO DID NOT WISH TO BE PASSIVE IN COMBATTING SOVIET EXPANSIONISM IN AFRICA OR ELSEWHERE. THE US SHOULD "USE" MOROCCO, WHICH, BECAUSE OF ITS AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EAST CREDENTIALS, MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN UNDERTAKING INITIATIVES THAT THE UNITED STATES ITSELF MIGHT ON OCCASION FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PURSUE.

10. KING ASKED ME TO CONVEY TO THE SECRETARY HIS BEST WISHES FOR SUCCESS IN HIS CURRENT TRIP AND IN FURTHERING PEACE IN THE AREA. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD WELCOME AN EARLY MEETING WITH SECRETARY, AND SUGGESTED A TECHNICAL STOP IN MOROCCO ON HIS RETURN FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. IF THIS WERE NOT POSSIBLE, HE HOPED TO SEE THE SECRETARY BRIEFLY IN RABAT WHEN LATTER VISITED EUROPE.

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